

Lake Michigan Fisheries Team
July 17, 2003
Green Bay

Draft Notes

Next meeting: September 8, 2003. Plymouth, WI (location to be determined by Brad Eggold)

Present: Mark Opgenorth, Mike Toney, Bill Horns, Al Niebur, Steve Hogler, Brad Eggold, Pradeep Hirethota, George Boronow, Tom Hansen, Matt Coffaro, Lee Meyers, Paul Peeters, Justine Hasz, John Netto, Mark Holey.

1) Brief updates

Time was allowed for short updates and reminders of topics of interest. The following topics were mentioned.

- NRDA project funding
- Status of smelt rule and whitefish trap net rule
 - Action: Bill Horns will look into what happens to a rule if the Department simply does not respond to a Legislative committee request for changes.
- Cooperative white perch gill net study
- Timetable for Green Bay yellow perch quota rule (green sheet due in late September)
- Proposal for cooperative agreement with FWS for work on Green Bay
- “Housekeeping” rule change regarding spearing yellow perch
- Michigan’s proposed coho study project
- FWS request for guidance regarding management of lake trout brood stocks
 - Action: Bill Horns will copy and circulate the request for guidance.
- Possible CDF near Sheboygan?
- CLC effort to rejuvenate the “Large-vessel Program” on the Great Lakes
- Saltonstall-Kennedy project solicitation
 - Action: Bill Horns will check to see if the marine species requirement still holds.
- Automating quotas
- Commercial fishing quota and license years
 - Actions: Bill Horns will talk to Pete Flaherty regarding legal obstacles to having the quota and license years correspond with calendar years. Paul Peeters and Tom Hansen will ask commercial fishers if such a change would be agreeable.

2) Vessel safety document.

Background (from agenda). Mike Toney has completed a revised draft of a section of the FH Handbook pertaining to large-vessel safety. It includes sections on vessel maintenance, inspections, training, and operations, as well as a section on monitoring of commercial fishing.

Action. Mike Toney will insert language regarding personal EPIRBS. Bill Horns will circulate the document in the Bureau and seek its incorporation into the FH Handbook, or other appropriate place.

3) Lake Michigan Technical Committee summer meeting

Background (from agenda). The Lake Michigan Technical Committee meets the two days preceding the LMFT meeting.

Actions. 1) Regarding the LMTC’s discussions of possibly thermally-marking all stocked chinook salmon, Paul Peeters will discuss this with Steve Fajfer to assess feasibility in our system. 2) Bill Horns will discuss formalizing the “red flags group” with the LMC. 3) Bill Horns will discuss the

question of when the public will again be consulted regarding stocking levels. 4) Bill Horns will bring to the LMC the question of criteria for revisiting the commercial yellow perch closure. 5) Brad Eggold will relay to Dave Clapp our desire to have Steve Hogler participate on the LMTC's Planktivore Working Group.

4) Walleye and musky regulations on lower Menominee River, and vicinity

Background (from agenda). At the June 11 LMFT meeting we discussed proposed walleye and musky regulation changes in the lower Menominee and vicinity, and discussed a memo from Steve Hewett raising some concerns. Justine Hasz agreed to draft a response to the Hewett memo, to fix some remaining bugs in the proposal, and to bring a revised proposal for discussion and endorsement at the July 17 meeting.

Action. The LMFT endorsed the regulation proposals as written.

5) Fish population modeling work group

Background (from agenda). We have four age-structured population models at some stage of development for Green Bay, Lake Michigan, and Lake Superior. Justine Hasz is working with John Netto of FWS to implement one for Green Bay yellow perch. Brad Eggold has worked with Mike Wilberg and others to implement one for yellow perch in waters of all states bordering southern Lake Michigan. Paul Peeters has initiated conversations about implementing one for the Door County whitefish populations. In addition, a student of Mike Hansen worked with Steve Schram to implement one for lake trout in Wisconsin waters of Lake Superior. We have discussed forming a work group to meet regularly and provide mutual advice and support in developing and maintaining these models. The work group would consist of DNR and FWS biologists, as well as other interested people. Mark Holey has suggested an approach to kicking this off.

Action. Bill Horns will convene a first meeting of the work group in late September. The meeting will be held in the FWS Green Bay meeting room. Invitees will include interested DNR and FRO staff, Mike Hansen, John Dettmers, Dan Makauskas, and Bill Mattes.

6) Lake sturgeon activities

Background (from agenda). A special NER/SER lake sturgeon meeting was held recently to discuss sturgeon management in all Wisconsin waters draining to Lake Michigan, and to prepare for the September meeting to the lake-wide Lake Sturgeon Task Group meeting in Menominee Michigan. Brad Eggold has circulated a summary of plans for lake sturgeon rehabilitation in the Manitowoc and Milwaukee Rivers.

Action. Discussion item.

7) Paul Peeters' study report on chinook stocking

Background (from agenda). Paul Peeters has completed and circulated for comment a report entitled "Chinook Salmon Stocking Technique Study".

Action. Discussion item.

8) Proposed agreement with FWS

Background. Justine Hasz and Mark Holey have developed a draft proposal under which NRDA funding available to the Department would be used to fund a cooperative agreement between the Department and the FRO to conduct certain specified activities related to yellow perch research and enhancement in Green Bay. This would be an extension of an existing agreement.

Action. 1) Justine will revise the proposal in response to suggestions made in the discussion. 2) Bill Horns will clarify what money is available and what steps would be needed to use it to fund this

proposal. 3) In the event the proposal is translated in to a specific cooperative agreement, we will look into including a clause by which a small portion of the funding could be withheld until all work is completed.

9) Positions

Background. On July 16, the FH Board discussed closing eight positions around the state. They decided to advance two options for discussion by the Water Management Team. Under one of those options, the “Kubisiak position” would be lost.

Action. The LMFT discussed the implication of losing that position. Bill Horns will prepare a memo to Mike Staggs and Steve Hewett, on behalf of the LMFT, summarizing the thoughts and concerns of the Team on this issue.